

NAME: Cerlyne Tung Shuo Ling

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Starting Point & Thoughts

My concept for this Term 3 creation portfolio is going to feature a variety of music styles, such as popular music, music for dancers and soundtracks for shows. In my portfolio, I always strive to include different types of music and genres in it as I want to expose myself to a wide range of musical styles. Additionally, by doing so, it allows me to learn on how to produce various types of music, and this helps me to gain a thing or two as a composer. (stage, 2016) In my opinion, include a variety of musical works in the portfolio is unquestionably a wise move as it helps the potential employers to know that I can create a range of musical genres, and this enables the likelihood that they will be interested in getting me as the music producer for their project. Moreover, this is also a good way for me to progress my career as I will probably obtain a better job opportunity and have a higher chance of being accepted to work with the experienced music producers in the industry.

For the popular music, I am going to work with a singer, Red and we have worked together on more than 7 tracks in the past year. The reason that she always chooses me as her music producer for her project because she thinks that we both have similar music taste and I can consistently fulfil the tracks' needs. Moreover, I can write lyrics and perform mixing and editing for the tracks. Thus, it is undoubtedly that with her limited budget, I am definitely a solid choice for her to rely on as I could do everything for a fair fee. Not to mention, she also told me that she would choose the potential tracks from the ones that we had completed (the popular music that I had included in my term 2 portfolio), and the tracks that we would be working on now (the popular music that I would be including in creation's portfolio), and include them in her upcoming album release. Not to add mention that my popular music works are obviously intended for commercial release as the lyrics are simple enough for everyone to sing along to, and the beats are catchy enough to draw the listeners' attention. (University of Illinois Press, n.d.)

Then, for music for dance, I will work with dance team with whom I have collaborated before when I was in my undergraduate course. If possible, I would like to create a few tracks in various genres and ask them to choreograph a dance along with the music.

Furthermore, for music for shows, I intend to approach a film company via online to inquire about their need for music creators for ongoing projects. During term 2, I composed music for advertising and received a positive feedback from the academics. Thus, in order to unleash my potential, I believe that it is always beneficial to learn more about diverse genres and fields. By doing so, I can not only challenge myself to learn about a completely new field, but also get to collaborate with people from different industries.

Benchmarking

I believe that it is important to establish a benchmark while working on a project so the team members will know what works well and what does not. A benchmark is essentially a reference point of comparison between our performance and that of others and this aids both my team and I in identifying areas where our performance can be improved. (volunteer, n.d.) Moreover, benchmark also assists us in evaluating both the calibre of work as well as customer satisfaction. Therefore, it is important to set a benchmark while managing a project because it speeds up team success and elevates our team reputations in the marketplace. (Marr, n.d.)

There are three keys of benchmarking and I would like to talk about my evaluation for success in each section:

Firstly, it is the process benchmarking. In this process, I will go through the assessment guidelines and ensure that I have a clear understanding on the assessment requirements. Then, I will start outlining the tracks that I am going to include in my portfolio. Later, in order to gain some ideas for what I can add to my project, I will spend some time to have a look at the alumni's portfolios and works. In my opinion, I think that it is very essential to go through a couple of works before starting so that I can have a sense of the overall picture and it is undeniable that it enables me to begin my work in a more efficient way. To make things clearer, I will also create a checklist and mark a tick on what works and what does not. Not to mention, I will also jot a short reminder for myself on why I failed to do so, so that I can improve for the next project.

Secondly, it is the strategic benchmarking. In this process, I will first review the feedback of my previous projects and then outlining my strengths and weaknesses. Later, I will start making plans to include tracks that I am skilled at producing to this creation's portfolio, so for those who view my works will know about my ability. Not to mention, as this is a student portfolio, I will always strive to improve myself by exploring more music genres in order to expand my knowledge in new areas. Moreover, after working on the tracks, I will also get tutorial session with my tutors to get some useful comments in order to enhance my works. In addition, I will also conduct a final evaluation of the audio quality to ensure that they meet the professional standard.

Thirdly, it is the performance benchmarking. In this process, I will keep reviewing my work as I go along, to gauge how much effort I have been putting and how well I have done for this project. Moreover, in order to foster loyalty and confidence between my music works and the clients, I will also have to ensure that my tracks have met the clients' needs and expectations. Furthermore, I also have to think of whether my tracks have fulfilled the commercial value and get of ways on how to promote them to the music market,

like looking for some music publishing companies or upload my tracks on Spotify or YouTube.

Success Criteria

Success has a different meaning to everyone and now I am going to talk about my benchmark for success. (Perry, 2023) In my opinion, I define successful when my clients are happy with works and I truly appreciate them as everyone is entitled to their own taste and it is very glad to meet people who got the mutual music flavour as me. I genuinely appreciate people who offers me a chance to create works for them, and this is the reason why I always strive to do my best to compose the track that fulfil their music needs.

Moreover, I measure successful by having return clients. As mentioned previously, the singer, Red, she is one of my returning clients. She always gets me as her music producer when comes to a new single release as my works fit her styles so much. For me, I would consider this as a tremendous success as my works are being appreciated. Therefore, for this creation portfolio, I will still continue working with her, but I wish to compose songs in a different genre, to challenge myself for my portfolio growth.

Furthermore, I define successful by learning something new. Before joining this postgraduate course, I used to just stay in my comfort zone, to compose only the popular music. However, after meeting more people and having conversation with them, it inspired me to start composing movie soundtrack and even incorporate audio tracks for videos and advertisements. Then, for this upcoming creation portfolio, I am going to do something that I have never done before, which is to create music for variety shows. I know that it is going to be challenging but I am willing to devote more time in doing research and then accept the challenge as I know that opportunity does not arise frequently, so it is good to seize when it comes.

Other than these, I define successful by overcoming the fear and not giving up. When receiving a new project with genre that I am not familiar with, I have to go through a lot of example works before starting. It is undeniable to say that the learning journey is not easy as it requires a great amount of time and effort. Therefore, it is vital for me to have a positive mindset and stay determined during the working process like looking for instrumentations and also doing trial and error with the mixing tools used for the project.

Case Study

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2005/jan/31/dance.shopping>

I come across an article entitled Double Trouble, written by Judith Mackrell and would like to make it as my case study. This article talks about a collaboration between a traditional dancer and modern musician and the obstacles that they faced during the process.

Jeyasingh is a Bharata Natyam traditional dancer while Nyman is a contemporary music composer. The traditions of Bharata Natyam is a style which the rhythmic frameworks of dance and music follow the same exact mathematical sequence. As this mindset was deeply ingrained in Jeyasingh's mind, therefore she expects the music to be in sync in a strict structure and she would choreograph her dance with precise mathematical method. However, this made Nyman very suffered when composing the piece as he is from a modern background and the way of him creating tracks was very simple and now all he could feel is his creativity being restricted.

Nyman comes from a western background, and he is more flexible when it comes to composing, while Jeyasingh is from a traditional background, so she expects everything to be synchronised. As they both comes from a different background and expose to different cultures, so they have to communicate a lot, and try to understand the cultural difference then comes to a common understanding. In the end, the piece contained two people's ideas and it is definitely a nice crossover piece as it contains a mix of traditional and contemporary elements.

I do understand the struggle of both them, as in my previous collaboration with the dancers, I did face some difficulties as well. I used to work with a dancer, Hanieh and she comes from an Indian traditional dance background, while I am from a contemporary background. Therefore, when we worked on a project, it took more time for her to understand my music and look for some references before choreographing the dance. In this creation project, I would like to have a different approach, which is to look for some videos on YouTube as reference and send them to the dancers. After they have gained some insights, I will explain my ideas to them for each section so that they can have a better understanding. After this, I will send the audio track to the dancers and ask them to choreograph the movements and send me a dance draft, and we can discuss further details later.

Work Process

Now, I would like to talk about the rough idea of how I am going to work on this creation project. Firstly, I will start off by understanding the project requirement. Then, I will start to think of the elements that I wish to include in it and then looking for collaborators like the singers, dancers, and people from different field, ask them whether they need a music producer for their works. At the same time, I will also start considering my strengths and weaknesses and then think of probably to start my work with the easier one and spend more time to study for the genre that I am not familiar with. Moreover, I will go through a lot of videos and relevant information via online to ensure that I have the basic knowledge so that it helps me to gain some confidence when expressing my ideas with the team and clients.

To compose the tracks, I own a small setup with necessities so I will do most of the tasks at my home studio. Not to mention, I actually got this habit of doing everything on my digital audio workstation (DAW). Then, for some instruments like strings and piano recording tracks, my original plan is to get professional players to do live recording to make the tracks sound more real. However, for the projects that I will be working on for this creation portfolio have a very limited budget, so I can only do everything from Logic Pro software. Besides, another reason that hold me back of doing live recording was I do not have enough microphones for the strings player to do the recording altogether. Therefore, these two are the reasons that restrain me from engaging in live recording.

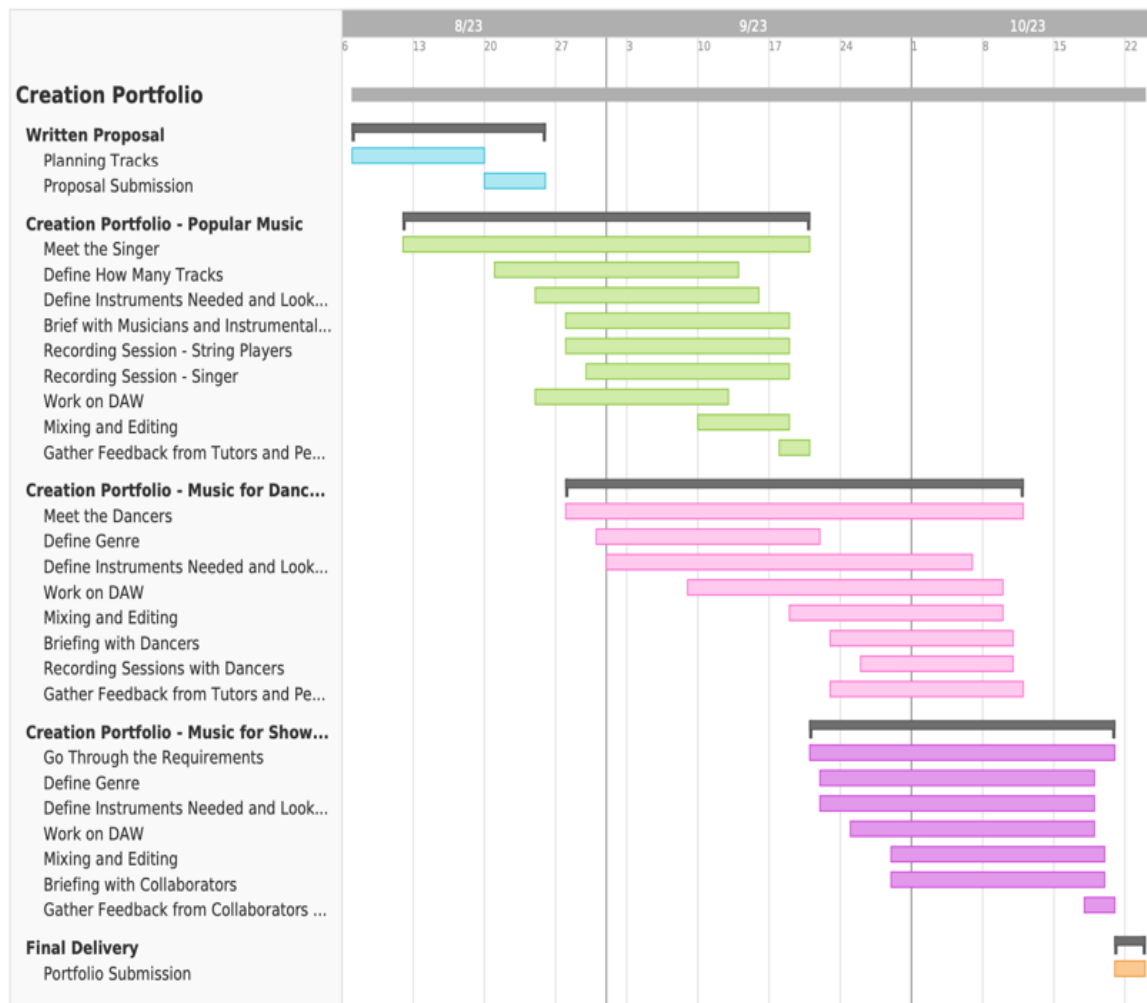
Then, for the vocal tracks, as I got condense microphone and vocal booth at my studio, so I asked the singer, Red if she would be interested in coming to my studio to do the vocal recording. The reason that I prefer her to do live recording at my place is as sometimes ideas do pop out during the recording session, and it is more convenient for me to share my opinions with her. However, she told me that she finds it more comfortable to work in her own studio. After much thinking, I do understand her concern because as a professional singer, she has better vocal tools and her studio's atmosphere probably going to make her feel more ease when doing the recording. Thus, the way of doing vocal recordings at my home studio is not working as expected, so I will request her to do the track recordings at her preferred location and then send them to me afterwards.

Other than that, before working on the project, I had also contacted my friends that my home studio had a very limited setup. Therefore, if I require any additional equipment, they promise to lend me a helping hand, and grant me access to their music studio.

Timeline

Last but not least, a project timeline is very important as it helps me to complete my work on time and comprehend each step with greater clarity, Therefore, I have created a timeline for this creation project.

Appendix: Timeline for My Project



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